



INTOUCH

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COMNAVSURFOR

Leadership Teams and Surface Force Ombudsmen, I spoke about Family Readiness in the last newsletter. In this edition of InTouch, I want to talk more about the importance of helping our Navy families, especially during transfers and moves. Integrating a Sailor and their family fully and rapidly into the command and the local area, including the spouse job market (if desired) and local schools, increases overall command readiness. Going the extra

mile in providing Sailors and their families the resources they need can influence career decisions. In addition to the sponsor program governing instruction, OPNAVINST 1740.3A, there are many other resources that a command sponsor should be aware of. I wanted to list a few I feel are very important to help ease a transition:

-- The Naval Personnel Command's Family Support and Relocation page (www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/SpouseSupport/) lists multiple links for both INCONUS and overseas information on spouse employment, transition assistance, Exceptional Family Member program and many more.

-- To help children with military moves, I recommend www.greatschools.net, www.militarychild.org and <https://schoolquest.org>. All provide excellent insight into smoothing the transition for family members.

-- For the working spouse, check out www.milspouse.org and www.mscn.org (Military Spouse Career Network) for helpful advice.

Of course, our Fleet and Family Support Centers function to help our families no matter the situation. All of your command sponsors and leadership need to be aware of their programs. Find out more at www.ffsp.navy.mil/.

Enlisted Sailors checking aboard our ships and commands deserve a positive check-in experience that includes things like a personal welcome from the departmental LCPO and CMC, assignment of a top-notch Sailor as running mate, a nametag and ballcap upon check-in, pre-assignment of rack, bedding, rack curtains and locker and a hot meal upon arrival regardless of the time of day.

Our officers should be welcomed by the next officer in their chain of command, XO and CO, as well be provided with the rest of the items listed above. Our spouses and children should be receiving a welcoming call from the Ombudsman and/or command spouse club.

Welcoming our newest Sailors and their families to the command with the proper attitude sets them on the right course for their tour. We have all learned over the course of time that staying Navy is not an individual decision; it is made around the dinner table. The PCS experience involves families in much the same way. The better we integrate families into our sponsorship and check-in processes, the quicker Sailors are prepared to assume their role in achieving their command's mission.

From the Force Ombudsman...

By Mrs. Susan Hare, CNSF Ombudsman

Greetings fellow Ombudsman and Surface Leaders,

Summer brings many wonderful and exciting things, for Navy families not the least of which is Permanent Change of Station (PCS) season. This year due to budget constraints, we have yet to see the large amounts of transfers usually associated with this time of year. However when the new fiscal budget is in place, it is probable to see a sizeable amounts of short fused orders. As ombudsmen we must be prepared to help service member and their families become fully integrated into our commands.

Serving as an active part of the command's sponsorship program is an excellent way to do this. Not only are ombudsmen instructed to do so in OPNAVINST 1740.3B but is also a tremendous way for us to support the command's mission. Each command will define the exact role in which they desire for you to serve, but linked are some excellent examples of best practices.

This month's links show great resources for your tool kit for incoming families. Keeping these readily available for your families will not only reinforce your professionalism, but also help you avoid making personal endorsements that could imply command or official endorsement. The Armed Forces Referral Network is a new DOD sponsored site for home rentals, sales and purchases. Military Child Education Coalition can give parents and students all the information they need to ease the confusion associated with changing schools. The Great Schools website can give parents school report cards at a glance. Military One Source can provide a "Know your Neighborhood Guide" with current local information on housing, schools, and even community statistics. Standard Information Topic Exchange (SITES) packages are designed by the local Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) and are an excellent source of current military and local information as well.

When it comes to the Sponsor Program and newly arriving families to our commands, we have one chance to make a good impression. Thank you so very much for all you do each day to make those impressions great!

Charlie, Golf, ONE!



Financial Planning For Relocation

Ongoing readiness means thinking about the importance of finances, budgets, and goals. Putting a plan down on paper is easy and will pay off with smoother family money management during relocation or deployment.

Preparation may prevent problems such as overdrawn checking accounts and bills not being paid because they "slipped through the cracks." A financial plan will give peace of mind and enable you to concentrate on your move to your next location. A well-developed financial plan will contribute to efficiently organizing and assuring your bills are not left behind.

Family finances are important. Lack of attention to finances and budgeting can lead to major difficulties any time, but most especially during PCS moves, or deployment. There are many things to consider when you begin to plan your financial budget.

Both the service member, and spouse need to decide in advance how much money will be budgeted to the bills, the upfront costs associated with the move, and how much to the family. The

[click here for the rest of the story](#)

Spotlight On...

FFSP Relocation Assistance Program Helps Sailors, Families Make Smooth Moves

From Fleet and Family Support Program Marketing, Commander, Navy Installations Command, Millington Det.

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) -- Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) counselors, available through the Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP), have the answers and resources to help ensure Sailors and their families experience a successful, stress-free move to a new duty station.

"RAP's purpose is to provide transitioning service members and their families with information about their new duty stations," said Hugh Durden, program analyst for Military Career Readiness Programs, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNI), Millington Det. "If a transitioning family has the right information, that can go a long way in determining whether they have a successful move or not. Studies show that the best predictor of a successful move is the accuracy of the mover's expectations."

Relocation assistance is not just for families or new Sailors who are completing their first PCS move, according to Durden.

"Everyone can benefit from assistance, whether it's their first move or their tenth," he said. "While young Sailors may believe all there is to moving is throwing their belongings into a seabag and getting on a plane, they still have a significant need for information. By the same token, senior Sailors who have a few moves under their belt and think they've seen or done it all can still benefit greatly from the services that RAP provides."

Experienced FFSP counselors can help service members ask the right questions and find the answers to questions ranging from house hunting, moving expenses, local employment, schools and preparing vehicles for travel to learning about the cultural differences at the new location.

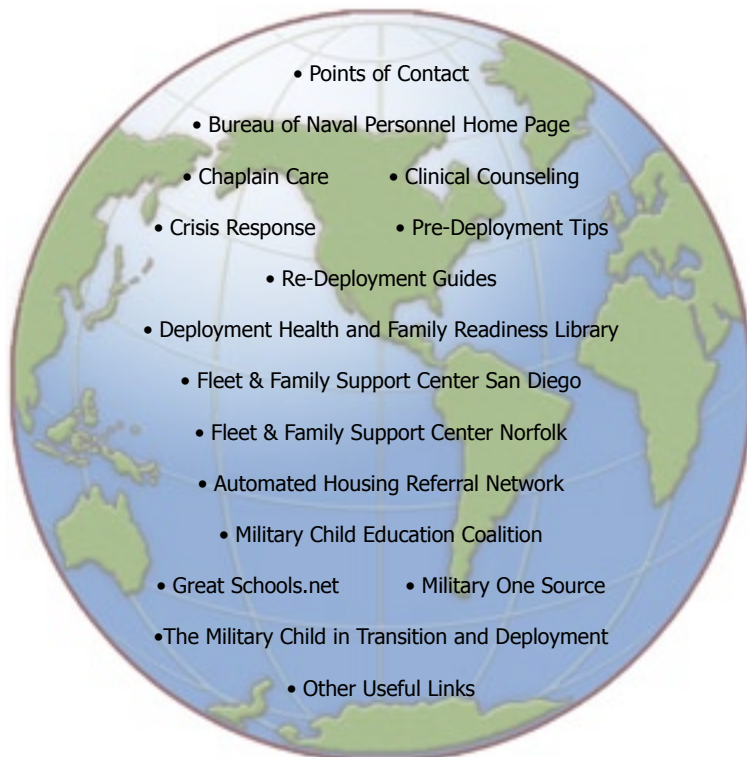
"Our counselors can help service members and their families have the best experience during a PCS move," said Durden. "Not only will they give them the information they require, but they'll also show them how to track their expenses and maximize their travel benefits and reimbursements."

"With the increased 'jointness' of bases, it's very important that pertinent relocation information pertaining to a particular area is available for everyone," added Durden. "It doesn't matter what service you belong to, you can receive help from any base worldwide."

The Navy's Relocation Assistance Program can help you create your own personal relocation plan, designed to address issues that are relevant to your move. For more information on RAP or to locate the nearest Fleet and Family Support Center, visit <http://www.ffsp.navy.mil/> or call their 24-hour information and referral hotline at 800-FSC-LINE.

Click here for a copy of the latest Ombudsman Instruction

Information & Support Links



Making the move easier for kids

From Navy Times, 17 July 2006

Moving with children in tow comes with its own unique challenges. It may never be a tear-free experience, but there are a few tricks to ensure that your kids have a smooth move, too.

Young children

- If you keep a positive attitude about the move and take care to lessen stress on yourself, your children will have a more positive attitude. Even babies can sense when you are stressed or upset.
- Explain the move to young children. Toddlers might be upset seeing movers pack their toys. Let them choose special books, toys and games to carry with them, along with a special blanket or stuffed bear.
- Make sure you've got infant supplies, such as bottles, formula, food, diapers, baby wipes, extra clothes and baby towels.
- Try to keep children on a schedule as close to their usual routine as possible for meals, naps and bedtimes.
- Show toddlers pictures of your new home, and tell them about their new rooms. Talk about their new community.
- Go to the playground in the new neighborhood to help your toddler make some connections. Using child development programs and resources at your new installation can help your child meet new friends. Also check into resources in the civilian community through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, www.naccrra.org.

School-age children

- Talk to your children about their new community as soon as you get your orders. Encourage them to ask questions, and answer them honestly.
- Help them arrange to keep in touch with old friends after they leave.

click here for the rest of the story